

Florida Education Association

Frontline Report

2026 Legislative Session

November 7, 2025

Three interim committee weeks have gone by and there are three left to go before the official start of the 2026 legislative session. It was a somewhat slow week on the education front with the majority of education committees not meeting.

This week we saw

- Continued discussions on voucher double-dipping,
- A plea from high school coaches for better pay, and
- The first bill to be heard in an education committee.

School Districts Finally Receive Last School Year's Funding

For the third consecutive meeting, the House PreK-12 Education Committee members had pointed questions for the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) and the voucher funding organizations about what changes they are making to prevent this from happening again.

And, for the third consecutive week, no solutions were provided to fix the issue. As [we pointed out](#) when the committee first met last month, FLDOE's Director of School Choice let the truth slip out when he called the defunding of public schools "a feature, not a bug" of universal vouchers.

The meeting kicked off with Chair Jenna Persons-Mulicka (R-Ft. Myers) announcing some breaking news: The legislature has authorized nearly \$50 million be given to school districts to recoup funds that they lost last year from students who were enrolled in public schools and simultaneously received voucher funding.

The funds are undoubtedly welcome for the impacted school districts, but it's important to note that the committee also discussed the structural issues that caused public schools to be underfunded in the first place—meaning public schools are still missing out on funds they should be receiving.

Already this year, there has been up to \$75 million in what the committee refers to as double-dipping. These are students who were not on a voucher roster for the first quarter of the year but nonetheless receive voucher funding for the first and second quarter. You can [read more about the double-dipping issue here](#).

All of this lost funding for school districts comes at a real cost for students, teachers and staff. Every dollar that goes toward funding private education is money that isn't going to raising teacher salaries, ensuring sufficient school supplies or supporting athletics and supporting arts programs.

In fact, for every \$1.00 state funding in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), nearly \$0.25 is dedicated to vouchers. To see how much voucher fundings costs your school district—and how that impacts your salary—click on the map below.

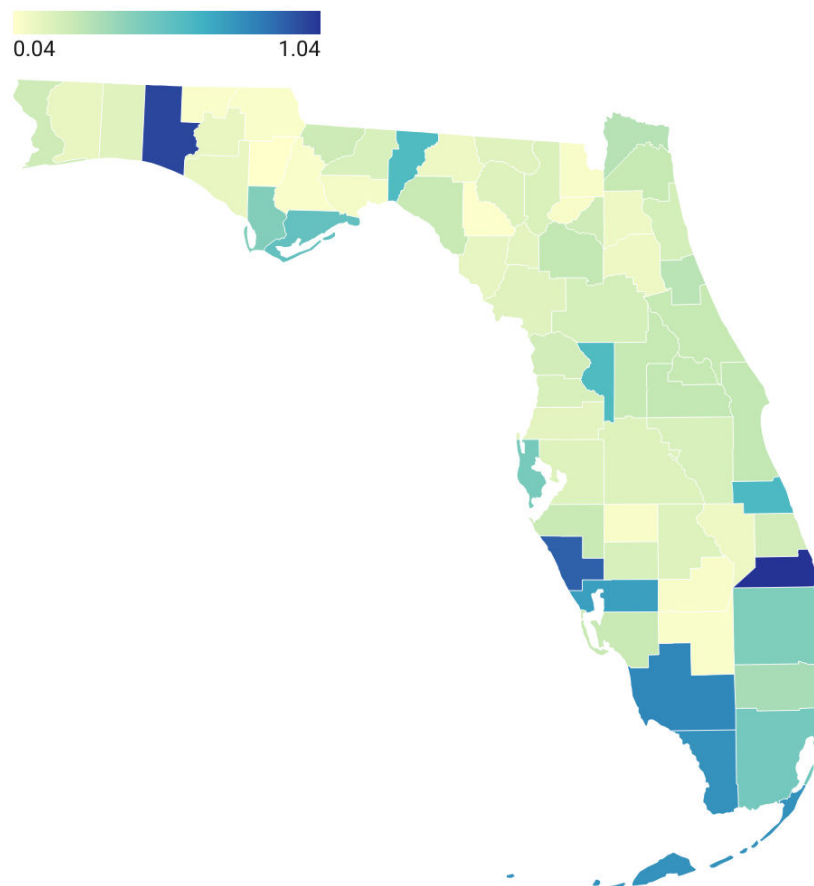
How large of a raise could YOU receive if your school district kept all of its FEFP funding instead of having it drained for private school vouchers?

Statewide \$0.25 out of every \$1.00 in FEFP funding is diverted to vouchers.

But, the number varies significantly from school district to school district.

Hover over your county to see:

- *How much out of each \$1.00 is diverted to vouchers,
- *The total FEFP funding diverted to vouchers,
- *The total number of teachers, and
- *How much funding would be available for teacher raises if no funding were diverted to vouchers.



All data for FEFP funding comes from page 9 of the 2025-26 FEFP Calculation

The number of teachers in each county comes from the FLDOE's 2024-25 Teacher Salary Data spreadsheet

Created with Datawrapper

Since the House's Education Budget committee has now devoted three full meetings to the issue of voucher funding, it is safe to expect there will be legislation forthcoming on this issue. We'll keep

you informed if and when a bill on this issue is filed and how you can advocate for public funds to remain in public schools.

One final note on vouchers—aside from the financial drain on public schools, voucher schools also offer a subpar education. Legislators are so scared of the public learning about the poor quality of many voucher schools that when Rep. Jervonte Edmonds (D-West Palm Beach) asked about metrics like high school graduation rates, the Chair of the committee shut him down and claimed his question was “a little off topic.”

Florida Coaches Demand Fair Pay

Meanwhile, in the Senate PreK-12 Education Committee, the Florida Coaches Coalition gave a presentation where they highlighted the low pay of coaches in Florida compared to other states, especially in the south.

At the conclusion of the presentation, there was a panel discussion that included Florida A&M University’s head basketball coach Charlie Ward, legendary high school football coach Mike Hickman, and the superintendents of Walton and Okaloosa Counties.

The superintendents were both sympathetic to the issue of low pay for coaches in Florida and explained the committee members, the root cause of the problem is Florida’s lack of funding for public education. Okaloosa Superintendent Marcus Chambers pointed out that he’d love to pay his coaches more, but he also wants to pay his teachers more, his bus drivers more, and his custodians more; however, there is only one pot of funding and it’s too small.

When Florida’s teachers rank #50 in the nation in average teacher pay, it follows that coaches (the vast majority of whom are teachers) also do not get paid what they are worth. The surest way for legislators to address this issue is with a significant increase in funding to the Base Student Allocation as Walton County Superintendent Russell Hughes pointed out.

Nursing Education

The first bill to be heard in an education committee in either chamber this year was [House Bill 121](#). The bill, which passed on a [vote of 19-0](#), deals with oversight of nursing education programs.

Looking Ahead

Legislators are back home in their districts next week. That's a great time to schedule meetings with them and let them know what your priorities are. Interim committee weeks will resume the week of November 17 and the first two weeks of December.

Thursday, November 20, the House Select Committee on Property Taxes will meet for the first time during the interim committee week period. The agenda has not been released yet, but it seems likely they will take up some of the proposals to reduce property taxes. Of course, we'll have a full recap in our next edition of Frontline.

In the meantime, to get the full rundown of what all will happen in the fourth committee week, [check out FEA's session webpage](#).

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